



News Release

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New Year brings new beginning for State Health Officer, Dr. Maxine Hayes *State Health Officer retires after decades of Public Health Service*

OLYMPIA — After more than 25 years of state service and 16 years as the state’s top physician, Dr. Maxine Hayes will leave the legacy she’s built at the State’s Department of Health, and retire on Dec. 31.

Dr. Hayes has been at the forefront of health for Washington residents as the state health officer. She has been both advocate and advisor to governors and the secretaries of health on issues such as disease investigation, health promotion, chronic disease prevention, and emergency response.

“Maxine has served our agency, the people of our state, and the public health system incredibly well and will be greatly missed,” said Secretary of Health John Wiesman. “She’s well-known and admired on a national level and we’re grateful to have had such a wonderful leader and champion of public health in our midst for all of these years.”

Filling the shoes left behind by Dr. Hayes will be a challenge but fortunately for the agency, Dr. Kathy Lofy, an agency medical epidemiologist, has agreed to serve as acting state health officer beginning Jan. 1.

Dr. Lofy oversees influenza surveillance and serves as a medical consultant to the Offices of Communicable Disease Epidemiology and Infectious Disease. Before that position she served as the agency’s Epidemic Intelligence Service officer and our state foodborne disease epidemiologist.

“We’re fortunate to have someone of Kathy’s background, skill, and caliber right here in the agency willing to step up while we work on a long-term solution for this crucial state position,” Wiesman said.

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Dr. Hayes is working with Dr. Lofy to assure a smooth transition as the Department of Health continues working to protect and improve the health of Washington residents. The agency is recruiting candidates for the permanent state health officer position.

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